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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: INDONESIA ESTH HIGHLIGHTS - JANUARY 2007

11. Summary. Minister of Forestry M.S. Kaban and European Union (EU) Commissioners Louis Michel and Stavros Dimas agreed in Brussels on January 8 to initiate formal negotiations on a voluntary partnership agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. On January 12, the leaders of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia officially endorsed an agreement to conserve the "Heart of Borneo" (HOB) at a meeting on the margins of the 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines. On January 17, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia issued a report asserting that the development of coffee plantations in and around Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park threatens Sumatran rhino, elephant and tiger habitats. On January 24, Vice President Yusuf Kalla announced that the government would open a tender process for a 2 million hectares reforestation project in 2007. On January 10, the Indonesian National Space and Aviation Agency (LAPAN) launched its first Indonesia-built micro satellite in conjunction with the Technical University of Berlin. The Government of Indonesia (GOI) issued a new regulation on obtaining foreign research permits on December 15 that requires all research permit applications to go through the State Ministry of Research and Technology. Ministry of Health data indicate that dengue fever infected over 8000 individuals and claimed at least 144 lives in Indonesia during January 2007. End summary.

Indonesia and EU Cooperate to Combat Illegal Logging

12. Minister of Forestry M.S. Kaban and EU Commissioners Louis Michel and Stavros Dimas agreed in Brussels on January 8, 2007 to initiate formal negotiations on a VPA on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. The agreement will ensure the legality of Indonesian forest products exported to the EU. Minister Kaban noted that, under the agreement, Indonesia and the EU would establish an independent body to monitor the legality of log sources. Indonesia and the EU plan to conduct a series of informal consultations with stakeholders in Indonesia in conjunction with the negotiations. Cooperation under the agreement will include capacity building, market and technical studies, and knowledge sharing.

Three Countries Issue Statement on Heart of Borneo

13. On January 12, the leaders of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, and Malaysia officially endorsed an agreement to conserve the Heart of Borneo (HOB) area at the third Summit of the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area in Cebu, Philippines. Leaders from the three countries plan to sign the joint declaration in Bali at the United Nations Forum on Forests on February 12. The HOB initiative aims to promote sustainable development, protect vital natural resources and reduce poverty. The HOB covers approximately 220,000 km2 (approximately 84,900 square miles) of equatorial rainforests and numerous wildlife

species. Scientists have identified more than 13 primate species, 350 bird species, 150 reptile and amphibian species, and over 15,000 plants species in the area. The HOB is also the source of 14 of the island of Kalimantan's 20 major rivers. WWF has announced plans to assist the three governments in implementing the joint conservation plan. The U.S. Government also has provided \$100,000 in funding to advance the HOB initiative.

Plantation Development Threatens Rare Sumatra Species

14. On January 17, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia issued a report asserting that the development of coffee plantations in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park threatens the habitats of a number of rare species. The report, entitled "How Illegal Coffee Plantations Increase the Threat to Sumatran Rhino, Elephant and Tiger Habitats in the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park," claims the increase in international demand for coffee has brought pressure to build additional plantations in the area. Plantations in the national park generate roughly 45% of the coffee produced for export in Lampung, Sumatra, according to the report. WWF Indonesia has called on central and local governments to promote alternate economic activities in the region to reduce dependence on coffee production. It has also asked countries that purchase coffee from the area to adopt responsible procurement policies and to control their chain of custody in an effort to support conservation in the park. In 2004, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park as a historically important area.

GOI Will Accelerate Reforestation Program in 2007

15. On January 24, Vice President Yusuf Kalla announced that the
JAKARTA 00000303 002 OF 002

government will open a tender process for a 2 million hectares reforestation project in 2007. Kalla noted that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has already instructed Indonesian policymakers and business interests to balance the needs of the wood industry with the risks of deforestation. Minister of Forestry Kaban noted that funding for the program will come from the State Budget, but he failed to specify the total amount of funding allocated to the project. The reforestation project will reportedly include re-planting and soil enrichment programs in both publicly and privately held areas.

LAPAN Launches First Indonesian-built Satellite

16. On January 10, the Indonesian National Space and Aviation Agency (LAPAN) launched its first Indonesia-built micro satellite in conjunction with the Technical University of Berlin. The satellite weighed 57 kilograms (126 pounds) and was launched into orbit by a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C7 rocket from the Indian Space Research Organization's Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. LAPAN engineers cooperated with scientists from the Technical University of Berlin to design and assemble the satellite.

The total cost of the satellite program to date is Rp 30 billion (US\$ 3.29 million). The satellite has an expected lifespan of two to three years, but LAPAN is optimistic that it will continue to function for up to six years.

17. The satellite is orbiting roughly 630 kilometers (391 miles) above the earth and carries telemetry and telecommand transmission systems, as well as an altitude control system. LAPAN will use the satellite for real-time monitoring of various natural hazards including forest fires, volcanic activity, and floods. The satellite will pass over Indonesia four times a day. Ground stations are located in Rumpin Serpong (Banten province), Berlin, and Spitzbergen, Norway. LAPAN Deputy Chairman for Technology Agus Nuryanto reportedly noted that Indonesia plans to launch another satellite in 2009 or 2010.

New Regulation on Foreign Research Permits

¶8. On December 15, 2006, the GOI issued Government Regulation 41/2006 on obtaining foreign research permits, replacing Presidential Decree No. 100 of 1993. The regulation will take effect on December 15, 2007. Under the new regulation, all research permit applications will be required to go through the State Ministry of Research and Technology (MENRISTEK). The regulation governs all research and development activities conducted by foreign universities, foreign research and development agencies, private foreign companies and foreign individuals. MENRISTEK is preparing a coordinating team to manage the new approval process, which will replace the current team under the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

Dengue Fever Claims 144 Lives in Indonesia

¶9. On January 31, the Ministry of Health released data indicating that dengue fever has infected over 8000 individuals and claimed at least 144 lives in Indonesia since the start of 2007. The Aedes aegypti mosquito, which can travel distances in excess of 100 meters, transmits the disease. Jakarta Health Agency Deputy Head Salimar Salmi noted recently that the constant stream of dengue cases was the result of the long transition between the rainy and dry seasons, which allows the mosquitoes to breed continuously. Beginning in late January, the GOI began a mass fogging campaign in the 41 of Jakarta's 267 sub-districts that the Government has declared to be "red zones." GOI officials define red zones as areas in which at least three people per week contract dengue fever and/or at least one person per week dies from the disease.

¶10. As of January 31, the number of dengue cases in Jakarta had escalated to 2,022 with eight recorded fatalities. The Jakarta city administration offers free dengue treatment at 17 hospitals in the city; however, hospitals often receive more patients than they can handle during the rainy season.

Pascoe